

## **STEP 2 – PROPOSAL ABSTRACT**

**Applicant Name:** **Butte-Silver Bow Local Government**

**Project Title:** **Drinking Water Infrastructure Replacement – Year 6 & 7**

### **Project Description and Benefits to Restoration:**

Due to the adverse impacts of mining from the Berkeley Pit and the underground mines, the groundwater aquifers in portions of Butte can never be used for drinking. The NRD assessment estimates for lost groundwater resources on the Butte Hill alone exceed 5,000 gallons per minute – about the average amount of water used by all Butte citizens on a typical day (except during sprinkling season). Consequently, to protect human health, use of existing groundwater wells is limited and there are prohibitions on new wells in certain areas.

Since 1992, Butte Silver Bow has been the owner/operator of the water utility division. As a result of a settlement, water consumers inherited neglected 100-year-old system. At this same time, Butte-Silver Bow ratepayers had to invest over \$49 million (see appendix C) to restore and replace its drinking water system – a complex infrastructure to import water from across the Continental Divide and from the mountain creeks surrounding Butte. These investments were unconditional and mandatory: There were no alternative sources to develop since the local groundwater is permanently damaged, and neglected improvements by the previous owner had led to federal orders to upgrade the system.

More work is needed. Butte-Silver Bow proposes a fifteen-year program to make essential improvements to the system, particularly the need to replace deteriorated (e.g. leaking, corroded, undersized) distribution lines in the neighborhoods where groundwater use is restricted. The proposed 15-year project would result in a coordinated, annual replacement program to respond to precise areas where deficiencies are creating the most problems.

As Years Six and Seven of the project, Butte-Silver Bow requests \$3,693,323.00 in NRD funds, and pledges \$1,231,108.00 (Year 6 \$1,819,581 NRD and BSB \$ 606,527 and Year 7 \$1,873,742 and BSB \$624,581) in matching funds to replace up to a total of 34,000 feet of distribution lines over a two year period. Over 15 years, up to 255,000 feet of distribution pipes would be replaced to provide better service to those citizens who cannot use the groundwater. This long-term investment will fulfill essential priorities and also achieve effective coordination with applicable NRDP requirements.